

## Weather Review: Louisiana, 2004

Louisiana's weather highlights for 2004 featured heavy rainfall in May, fall-like weather in August, summer-like weather in October, a close call with Hurricane Ivan, and a White Christmas for parts of south Louisiana.

Statewide, annual temperature averages were slightly above normal, averaging 67.3°. Louisiana experienced a wetter-than-normal year with the annual rainfall totaling 67.8 inches, more than 7.50 inches above normal.

**January:** The month started out unusually warm with statewide temperatures averaging 10° above normal for the first few days before temperatures plummeted into the 20°s and 30°s. The passage of a couple more cold fronts brought widespread rainfall across the state with several reports of wind damage, hail and a couple of tornadoes.

**February:** Statewide precipitation averaged 8.93 inches, the second wettest February on record. A mid-month 6-day rainfall episode was a major contributor to the high rainfall total. Severe weather during the last week of the month also brought in heavy rains, flash flooding, hail and high winds.

**March:** Statewide rainfall for the month was almost 3.0 inches below normal. Several cold fronts passed through the state, providing little or no rainfall. Although there were some isolated reports of severe weather and heavy rainfall, most of the month was dominated by warm temperatures and below average precipitation.

**April:** Louisiana experienced a couple of days of unseasonably cool temperatures around mid-month, when lows dropped into the upper 30s for portions of the state. The latter part of the month was dominated by a couple of severe weather outbreaks, with heavy rainfall; in some areas amounts totaled 5 to 10 inches.

**May:** Heavy rains and flooding were the major highlights for this month. Several upper air disturbances caused days of extremely heavy rainfall; some southern areas of the state received over 15 inches of rain. Statewide precipitation averages were 4.5 inches above normal for the month.

**June:** The wet weather pattern continued with the state recording the third wettest June on record. The rainfall occurred on numerous days spread across the entire month. The only wetter Junes were in 1989 and 2001, both driven by single events---tropical storms named "Allison."

**July:** July was a typical summertime month with hot temperatures and afternoon thunderstorms. Many storms produced high winds, hail and even some isolated tornadoes.

**August:** Cooler-than-normal temperatures were the trend for most of August. Several low temperature records were broken following early cold frontal passages, which brought October-like temperatures to the state.

**September:** The state had a close call with Hurricane Ivan, but escaped with some locally heavy rains and hurricane force winds just in the extreme southeastern part of the state. Ivan revisited the state again about a week later and dumped some locally heavy rainfall on parts of the southern half of the state. Statewide precipitation average was over 2.5 inches below normal.

**October:** Heavy rains from Tropical Storm Matthew dumped 10 to 17 inches of rain over parts of south-central and southeastern Louisiana. Summer-like temperatures were the story for the latter part of the month. Statewide temperature averages were 13°F above normal for the last 2 weeks of the month, with many stations soaring over 90°F. This led to the third warmest October on record for the Bayou State.

**November:** Severe weather produced 12 tornadoes across the state during Thanksgiving week. One tornado touched down in Olla as an F3 tornado, causing one fatality, 20 injuries, and damage to approximately 90 homes/mobile homes. Statewide average rainfall was over four inches above normal for the month.

**December:** Severe weather continued to affect the state at the beginning of the month with more reports of tornadoes. The biggest highlight of the month was the extremely unusual White Christmas. Several locations in south Louisiana reported sleet and snow on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.